

DALE FARM HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Secretary
Grattan Puxon
1 John Harper Street
Colchester CO1 1RP

Mr Bala Mahendran
Chief Executive
Basildon District Council

10 August 2010

CONDUCT OF BDC IN CARRYING OUT EVICTIONS

Dear Mr Mahendran,

I am directing this letter to you as Chief Executive since correspondence and dialogue with officers concerned with overseeing the BDC evictions of Gypsies and Travellers are getting us nowhere.

In order to re-establish a minimum of trust and understanding, and to be able to move towards a solution acceptable to all parties, we on our side need clarification and a degree of transparency from you. Below are listed several points that we ask you personally to respond to in a full and frank manner:

- 1 It has been proposed that land at Gardiners Lane South, some owned by the HCA, could be utilized for the development of a mobile-home park for families facing eviction. Initially Carla Vivekanandan replied saying an officers meeting to discuss this would be sent up. Is that meeting going to take place?
- 2 A notice (copy enclosed) has been issued to families at Hovefields stating, among other things, that if they have not quit their land by 31 August, movable property will be removed and stored for later recovery by owners. Contrary to this undertaking, BDC contractors Constant & Co despite the pleading of the owner broke up a Portacabin-type utility unit. Why? Will the owner be compensated for this mistake?
- 3 Please clarify to us what the policy of the BDC is towards similar movable property items at Hovefields and Dale Farm when and if further evictions are carried out. This is important as families need to know what will happen to such property if they were to vacate their plots (yards) but were unable quickly to dispose of chalets, mobile-homes and utility units. Will they be broken up despite attempts to comply with notices? Can you assure us they will not?
- 4 We need to see the Risk Assessment Report submitted before the operation on 29 June 2010 and herewith request a copy without delay under the Freedom of Information Act. Will you undertake to see that we get one?
- 5 Our conclusion from the manner in which the eviction was conducted on 29 June at Hovefields, there being needless destruction of property and serious breaches of safety, is that Constant bailiffs are out of control. Can you assure us therefore that at any future operation of this kind a named senior executive officer of BDC will be present and approachable by residents?

Should your responses be unsatisfactory, we will consider taking matters up with the LGO.

Sincerely

Grattan Puxon

Basildon Council

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Date	29 th July 2010
Please ask for Department	Carla Vivekanandan Environment & Community Services
Tel. No	01268 294509
Fax No.	01268 294550
E-Mail	Carla.vivekanandan@basildon.gov.uk
Our Ref	
Your Ref	

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find attached your **28 day notice letter**. The Council is now formally informing you that if you do not vacate **your plot by midnight on the 31st August 2010**, the Council will enter on to the land shown edged red on the attached plan and remove all portable structures and place in storage; demolish any fixed structures; dig up any hardcore and hardstanding and a bund will be created around your plot. Information on the storage of your goods and retrieval will be supplied to you at a later date.

Please note as a result of this work, your water and electricity supply will be cut off.

If you would like to make a homeless application, please contact the Council's Homeless department on 01268 294218.

If you are on medication and would like to ensure that you have sufficient supply during the clearance or help in identifying an alternative health provider, including ensuring health records are readily available to health professionals, please contact your local GP.

If you are concerned about schooling or need help in finding alternative school places closer to your new location, which might include accompanied visits, ensuring educational assessments are available to the new school and provision of school transport where required, please contact the Traveller Education Service at Essex County Council on 01268 531291.

Please note that Essex County Council will continue to offer and provide transport to those children able/willing to go to school during the action as normal.

If you are currently receiving a social care package or support from a worker from Essex County Council, please contact Social Care Direct on 0845 7430430.

Basildon District Council
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